



Key Points

1. Farm staff must know pick up plan and calf ID system to be used. Plan ahead.
2. Collect calves at least once a day to reduce bonding time with the cow.
Get the calf to a warm dry environment as soon as possible.
3. Treat calf navel with iodine spray before transporting and again at shed.
4. Trailer must be clean and dry. Sunshine is a good steriliser.
5. Don't overcrowd trailers - provide shelter and drive slowly.
6. Treat NEWBORNS with care.
7. All newborns must receive 12% of their bodyweight in fresh warm colostrum within 12 hours of birth.



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Calf Rearing Fact Sheet 1.4

Calf collection

- Have a plan and make sure it is understood by all staff.
- The calf identification and tagging system needs to be clear and straight forward.
- Collect calves twice a day, if practical. The aim is to collect as soon as possible after birth. This provides control over colostrum intake.
- Collection soon after birth reduces the time calves have to suckle and lessens the chance of the cow contracting mastitis.
- Aim is to get the calf to a dry warm environment as soon as possible and feed a known quantity of fresh high quality colostrum.
- Spray navel with 7% iodine solution before transporting and again in shed. Cover the navel completely with the spray solution.

Calf trailer

- Needs to be CLEAN and DRY and protected from wind and rain. A deep bed of dry clean straw works well. Clean rubber mats are OK as long as it is not too wet and cold.
- Always place calves gently in the calf trailer. They are NEW BORN.
- Calf trailers are a major source of bugs, so they they must be kept clean and dry.
- DO NOT place too many calves in the trailer. Drive slowly.
- Calves standing all over each other is not acceptable.

Arrival at the shed

- Feed 12% of bodyweight of high quality fresh colostrum to all calves within 12 hours of birth. To be sure all calves get colostrum it is often easier to tube all calves with 2-4 litres of first milking warm colostrum.
- Don't assume a calf has had sufficient colostrum from its mother.
- A 30 kg calf requires 3.5 litres of colostrum within 12 hours of birth.
- First milking colostrum has more antibodies (immunoglobulins), fat, protein, minerals and vitamins than transition milk.
- Antibodies in colostrum are only absorbed for the first 24 hours of a calf's life. Ideally give two feeds of first milk colostrum within the first 12 hours of life.
- Calves that are weak or cold require extra attention. Use a heat lamp box and tube feed with warm, good quality colostrum.